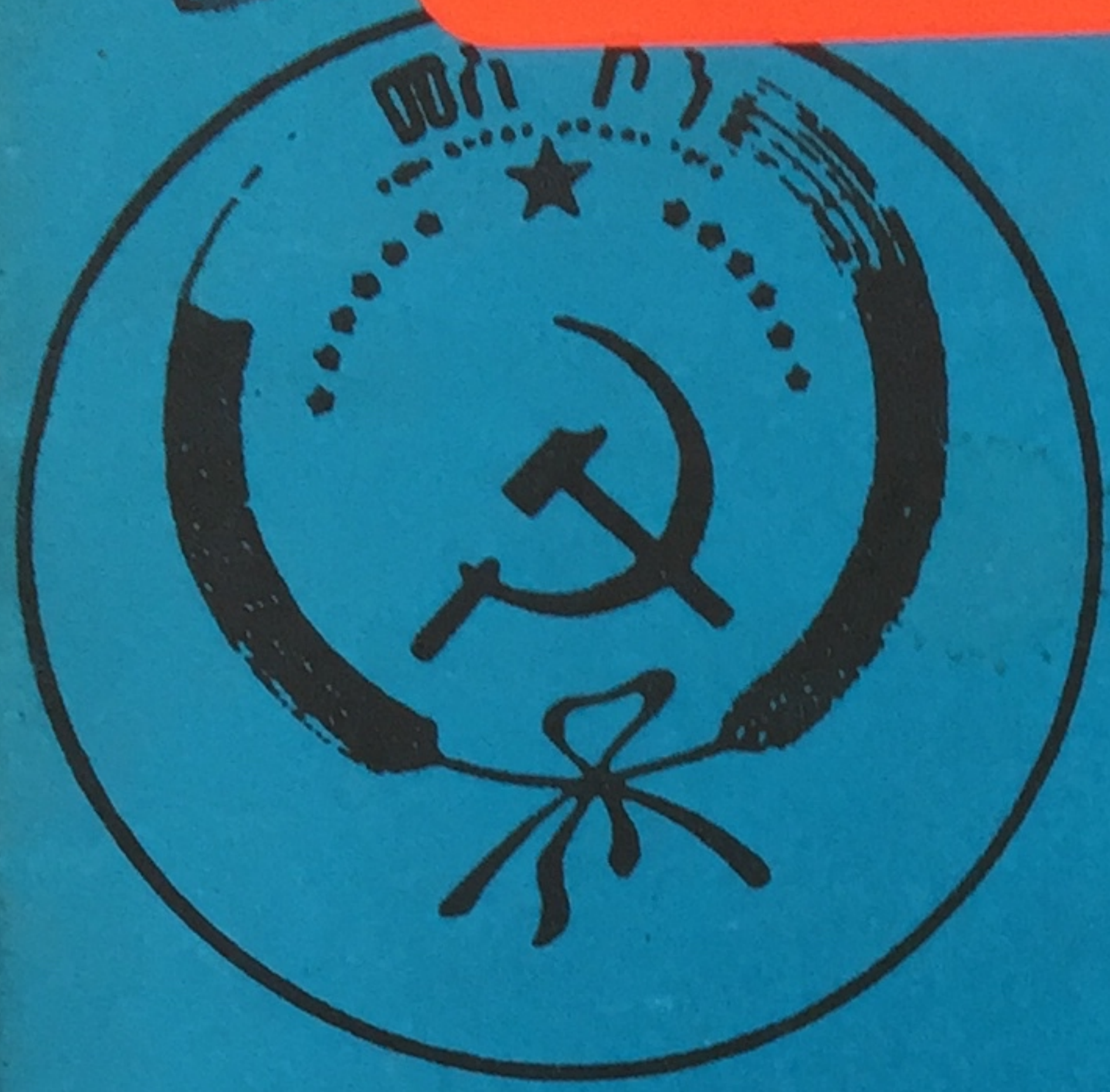


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NEW ETHIOPIA NEWSLETT

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September 12 : Six years after

On September 12, 1974, the revolutionary upsurge of the Ethiopian people that started six months earlier registered one of the earliest and important victories on the path of liberation of Ethiopia. On that day, the tyrant Haile Selassie was deposed following tremendous pressure from the popular movement. This victory, spectacular as it might have been was neither the last nor the most significant. But it is celebrated every year as an important land mark on the path of Ethiopia's liberation.

This year's celebration however, gave no cause for rejoicing to the military dictatorship and still less to the Ethiopian people. Six years after the deposition of the tyrant and three years after the post 1977 counter revolutionary developments, the Ethiopian peoples find themselves at grips with one of the most ruthless military dictatorships in independent Africa. Under the military's "Socialism" and soviet "internationalism" today's Ethiopia is deep in a serious economic, social, political and moral crisis that has no parallel in its history. It has become a country which holds all the gloomy records in terms of repression, human rights violations, famine and misery. In all respects, the present dictators and their Soviet masters have amply demonstrated that they have no lessons to receive from the tyrant Haile Selassie and American imperialism.

Haile Selassie's Ethiopia was ravaged by a deep economic crisis whose most accute manifestation was the 1973 Wollo famine which claimed the lives of 200 000 poor peasants. According to figures given by the dictatorship itself "socialist" Ethiopia does not fare better. In fact the opposite is true. Since 1978, famine has constantly been on the rise and now the number of famine stricken people in the country stands at 5 089 000 ! This figure has no parallel in the country's history. It is also the most serious case of mass starvation in the present world.

In the cities misery and unemployment were rampant during the feudal days. Now, not only new jobs have not been created to absorb the growing army of unemployed, but the closing of factories and other services is provoking mass lay offs and increased unemployment in Ethiopia's urban centers. Systematic persecution of small private contractors is driving dozens of Ethiopians out of the business. The repression against qualified workers and intellectuals coupled with the corruption and mismanagement of the ruling clique has completely disorganized the national economy.

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This deep economic crisis is of course closely linked with the unprecedented political repression that has come along with the counter revolutionary developments of the last three years. If Haile Selassie's Ethiopia was indeed a feudal tyranny, the present "socialist" regime has turned it into a prison state. Well over 20 000 prisoners are languishing in the Derg's prisons. During the past three years, and specially during the 1978 "red terror" campaign, thousands of Ethiopia's democrats and patriots have been summarily executed. The human rights records of the present regime are so poor, to say the least, that concerned international organizations, including Amnesty International and the UN Human rights commission have been regularly condemning the regime for its "gross human rights violations".

Famine and repression have also forced about 2 million people to leave their homes and seek exile in the neighbouring countries. According to figures of the UNHCR one out of every ten refugee in the world is an Ethiopian. This makes the refugee problem in the horn of Africa the most serious case of famine and misery facing the international community.

But all this is not going unchallenged. In fact the other side of this gloomy picture is the rising tide of popular and patriotic resistance that is manifesting itself in almost all regions of the country. Unprecedented chauvinism and repression against Ethiopia's oppressed nationalities has given rise to determined national resistance that has no parallel in the country's history. The past year has witnessed the intensification of the political and armed struggle of the Tigray, Oromo, Sidama and other nationalities. In Eritrea, the promises and illusions of a "quick victory" and the euphoria attending the "victories" of late 1978 have all vanished into the air. The difficulties encountered at the Nakfa front held by the EPLF forces and the subsequent demoralization of the troops stationed in the region have driven home the failure of the regime to "crush" the Eritrean revolution. Economic crisis and political repression have brought about a general upsurge of democratic opposition and an increasing contradiction within the armed forces.

Concerning the democratic forces, one important development of the past year is the growing awareness of the necessity of unity in order to do away with the chauvinist military dictatorship. Up to now all the democratic forces which, taken together, would have formed a tremendous opposition, have not been able to unite. The survival of the dictatorship, which is completely isolated from the people, has been rendered possible not only by the flow of arms from the Soviet Union and the presence of foreign troops on Ethiopia's soil, but also by the disperssion of the democratic opposition forces. This fact is being realized by more and more revolutionaries. Discussions with Eritrean progressives that have been going on for some time have given some encouraging results and have paved the way for a principled alliance. Contacts with nationality movements are underway and the prospects for the creation of the long overdue democratic front have never been so promising. During the coming year, ME'ISONE intends to continue on this path which is the only

guarantee for a lasting victory and complete liberation.

These developments, which are taking place against a background of a steadily rising tide of popular resistance are having their demoralizing effects on the chauvinist dictatorship. They account for the low profile maintained by the otherwise pompous and extravagant regime during this year's september 12 celebrations. Not only the usual rhetoric on the "great achievements" of the regime was curbed, but also Mengistu himself was obliged to acknowledge before a group of foreign journalists that the dictatorship's troubles were far from over. In addition to the two war fronts in Eritrea and the Ogaden, Mengistu declared that "the country" was also fighting a third war in Tigray. Other developments, not yet acknowledged by the regime are, however, equally important and would surely have far reaching consequences during the coming months. Growing militancy of workers and peasants and signs of unrest within the armed forces, of which some recent examples will be given in this issue of "New Ethiopia" are unmistakable signs of the impending tempest.

Encouraged by these bright perspectives, ME'ISONE will continue to intensify its struggle on the side of the Ethiopian people. It calls upon all progressive and peace loving forces in the world to express solidarity with the peoples of Ethiopia in their struggle to achieve the noble objectives cherished by all progressive mankind : peace, democracy and social justice.

HOW SERIOUS IS THE PROBLEM ?

* With over 5 million people and 9 regions out of 14 affected, the present famine in Ethiopia is the most deadly in the country's history.

* During the last three year famine has been constantly on the rise. Figures given by the regime itself show that the number of famine stricken people was 2 280 000 for 1978, 3 000 000 for 1979 and 5 089 000 in 1980. The number of regions affected has increased from 4 in 1978 to 9 in 1980.

WHY DID IT HAPPEN ?

* The present disaster is caused more by political and military factors than by national calamities. Famine strikes hardest in regions where chauvinist repression and wars are devastating the country.

* War, repression, exile etc., have decreased the peasant working force by 16% and brought about a sharp decline in agricultural production.

* War and repression have completely disrupted the distribution mechanisms (transport, storage, marketing etc.) and have thus made it difficult to distribute any available assistance to those in need.

WHY WILL FAMINE CONTINUE ?

* The prospects are grim because the military dictatorship continues its policy of war and repression which are generating the famine situation.

* The situation is further agravated by the embezzlement of relief funds and by the diversion of relief material to support the famine generating wars.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP ?

▶ Send letters and/or telegrammes of protest to the PMAC expressing your opposition to the famine generating wars and the embezzlement of relief funds at the following address :

▶ PMAC P.O.Box: 5707, Addis-abeba ETHIOPIA

▶ Participate in our life saving campaign by sending your donations to :

▶ P.JAVAUX
CREDIT LYONNAIS
Compte n° 42682 Z
Gy 600

FRANCE

▶ Or send your donation through international relief organizations that are already operating on the field.

▶ Growing unrest within the armed forces

Against a background of bitter resentment caused by the presence of foreign troops and officers in Ethiopia, the democratic and patriotic opposition in the armed forces is more and more coming to the open.

In June 1980, a meeting of a unit stationed in Negelle Borena, in South Eastern Ethiopia, was quelled by the indiscriminate bombing of the whole area.

In September, some representatives of the armed forces who came for the celebrations in Addis Abeba put forward a series of demands to the dictator Mengistu. These demands included democratic rights and an end to blind repression, an end to the war in Eritrea and immediate negotiations to solve the problem peacefully, a rotation system that would allow those who have stayed long enough at the various warfronts to rejoin their families etc.. Mengistu promised to "study" these demands but a few days later all the "ring leaders" of the "rebellion" were arrested and some of them were executed.

In early October, some units stationed in Eritrea put forward similar demands. With the news of the above events in mind, they refused to send representatives to Addis Abeba and instead demanded that Mengistu himself come to Asmara to discuss the issues with them. At the same time, there have been serious shootouts and battles within the armed forces in the outskirts of Asmara as well as Keren. Meanwhile the announced "sixth offensive" against the stronghold of Nakfa, held by Eritrean liberation forces, did not materialize. EPLF sources attribute this to the serious demoralization and contradictions within the armed forces.

▶ Mengistu acknowledges "problems" in Tigray

The struggle of the Tigray people for self determination, under the leadership of the TPLF is giving a tough time to the chauvinist dictators. In spite of a 30,000 strong army sent to the region to "crush" the Tigray people's struggle militarily, TPLF forces have been undertaking more and more daring and successful actions against the regime troops and liberating more and more regions. The situation has grown so critical to the dictatorship that the latter is not able to hide it any more. Answering to questions by foreign journalists in September, Mengistu acknowledged that "Ethiopia is now fighting on three

fronts in Eritrea, the Ogaden and Tigray". However, what Mengistu "forgets" to acknowledge is the fact that other parts of the country, this time in the southern regions, are also getting out of hand. He "forgets" the struggle waged by the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) in Harrarge and parts of Bale, the Somali Abo Front in Bale and parts of Sidamo and the increasingly active Sidama National Movement that now controls whole regions in Sidamo. Let us be sure that other such "problems" will be acknowledged and discussed at Mengistu's next press conference.

► Forced labour rejected by poor peasants

The regime's plan to "resettle" more than 250 000 peasants from the regions of Wollo and Tigray in the southern regions of the country was supposedly forwarded as the "final solution" to do away with famine in Ethiopia. But the real and unavowed reasons of the "resettlement project" were quite different. Politically, it was a move intended to give the chauvinist dictatorship "reliable" outposts in the lands of the "unreliable" oppressed nationalities. Economically, the objective was to provide the regime with a mass of forced labourers to work on "collective farms" under the strict control of the state. As the would be settlers refused to be uprooted from their lands, the government rounded up thousands of able bodied farmers from Wollo and Tigray and forcibly brought them to regions like Wollega and Kaffa. Now the unbearable conditions in these forced labour camps and the legitimate opposition of the peasants in these areas are pushing the "settlers" to demand their return to their own regions.

For obvious reasons, the regime is absolutely hostile to these demands of the peasants. In August about 200 "settlers" from Wollo representing thousands "settled" in the Kaffa region were sent to the regional capital, Jimma, to forward these demands to the authorities. As usual the regime responded by arresting all the representatives out of which 36 were brutally murdered by the government's security forces.

"Settlers" from Tigray, this time in the Wollega administrative region, decided to march all the way to Tigray after the government gave a deaf ear to similar demands. However, these peasants and their families were intercepted by the regime's security forces and were "asked" to return to their camps. A PMAC delegation, headed by the assistant secretary general, Lt. Fesseha Desta was sent to "persuade" the peasants to change their minds and return to the labour camps. When they refused, the "ringleaders" including some elderly peasants were rounded up and taken to unknown destinations while the others were forcibly taken back to their camps by military trucks...

▶ Workers refuse to pay "voluntary" contributions

For some time now, the regime has been devising an endless series of fund raising tricks to extort money from the people. These includes compulsory feasts at which money would be raised for the "starving masses" or more frankly for the "fronts". Fines have been introduced for a variety of "offenses" such as failure to attend Kebele meetings, to participate in demonstrations of support to the regime organized by the regime etc. But the wage freezes that have been in force in all factories for the last two years and the rising cost of living have made these "voluntary" contributions and fines an unbearable burden to the low income groups. No wonder then, that the number of workers who refuse to comply with the regimes demand of "voluntary" contributions has been on the rise during the last months.

The most recent example of anti "voluntary" contribution actions is that of agricultural workers of the Merti Juju area in Arssi. The workers who have been "voluntarily" contributing during the last two years refused to comply with the latest orders which came just before the Ethiopian new year celebrations in early September. This lead to the arrest of the leaders of the workers on charges of "counter-revolutionary activities". All the workers, who, as they said "had nothing to loose by daring to struggle" went on strike and defied government orders to go back to work and pay the contributions. Faced with the growing militant mood of the workers, the authorities had to retreat and the strikers went back to work after the demand for contributions was withdrawn and the arrested leaders were freed.

▶ Ethiopian Air Lines workers impose 8 hour day

One of the most important provision of the labour law of December 1975, was the introduction and generalization of the 8 hour working day. As is the case with the other provisions of this proclamation, the 8hr. day has been slowly discarded and has given way to prolonged working days in the factories and other work centers. Last year, with the memory of the "red terror" campaign in the minds of many workers, the dictatorship managed to intimidate many factories into accepting a 16 hr. a week overtime work. This was termed as "a voluntary contribution to the national revolutionary development campaign". It was also supposed to be limited in time.

In the case of EAL, the 16 hr. overtime obligation was supposed to last for six months and the employees "accepted" the increase on this understanding. Now almost a year after the imposition of this "voluntary work" the management tried to prolong the system for another six months. The employees refused to comply with these new demands and fought for the restauration of the 8 hr. day. Faced with the determination of the workers and fearing that a prolonged crisis would incite workers in the other sectors to follow the EAL example, the regime was forced to accept the workers demands and to do without the "voluntary" overtime work of the EAL employees.

▶ The regime's attempts at "consolidation"

While whole regions of the country are getting out of hand and workers', peasants' and soldiers' discontent is steadily on the rise, desperate attempts at "consolidation" are being undertaken by the military regime. Recent moves to create youth and women's organizations under the full control of the government are examples of such attempts. But unfortunately for the dictatorship, these moves, far from helping to consolidate the regime, are clearly exposing its anti-democratic nature.

Governmental decrees to organize the "Union of the Youth of Revolutionary Ethiopia" and a "Union of Ethiopian Women" were issued in early August and "representatives" from the administrative regions held founding congress in Addis Abeba in late August 1980. All necessary precautions were taken to ensure that no "right roaders" (ie members or sympathizers of ME'ISONE and its youth movement) find their way to the leadership echelons of these two organizations. But even among the hand picked delegates that attended these congresses, the regime could not trust all. It was therefore in no position to allow "democratic" elections to the offices of the organizations. During the COPWE congress in June, the names of the CC and polit buro members were read out to the congress participants.

Notwithstanding the sham "elections" that took place at the youth congress, the method used was no less anti-democratic. At the end of the congress, the name of the president of the organization and those of the other officers were read out to the participants. As it turned out, the president was a "representative" from the Arssi region known only to a hand full of the 1200 participants!

As for the women's organization, the regime's leaders have found no other way than to name their own wives and mistresses to responsible posts in the organization. The "president" is a wife of a cabinet minister and the other "leaders" are wives and/or mistresses of high ranking officers of COPWE.

▶ Forced recrutement continues

Another aspect of the attempts at "consolidation" is the regimes policy of forced recrutement to its "peoples' militia". The dictatorship needs fresh troops to continue its wars at the various fronts and to offset the effects of increasing demoralization and unrest within the regular army. As the peasants in all regions are opposed to what they call "a tax in blood", Mengistu himself had to travel secretly to the regions of Kaffa, Ilubabor, Gamogofa and Wollega in order to discuss ways of overcoming the peasants' resistance. The "new" method is nothing new. In the countryside, surprise raids are organized by the local police and able bodied young people are kidnapped to be

taken to the "Tatek" military camp near Addis Abeba. In the urban centers, specially in Addis, the Kebeles have been rounding up the "unemployed" (a term which, in the vocabulary of the regime includes all the poor, the shabbily dressed, school dropouts etc.). Some of these are sent to the forced labour camps specially in Setit Humera in the north and others find their way to the "Tatek" camp. ME'ISONE sources in Addis-Abeba have disclosed that during the month of September, a total of 70 truck loads of peasants and urban poor have been forcibly brought to this training center.

► Mengistu in Moscow : arms for a soviet base in Ethiopia?

The regime's response to the democratic and patriotic opposition in the country is also an increased dependence on the Soviet Union... and the further alienation of the country's national independence. In late October, Mengistu left for Moscow, reportedly on a "friendship visit" to the Soviet Union. The real purpose of this visit is, however, to ask for more arms and probably for more foreign troops that the regime needs desperately to face the mounting opposition. But what Mengistu and Co. fail to understand is that increased intervention of the Soviet Union in Ethiopia would only help in stiffening the patriotic opposition specially within the armed forces.

To support his demands for more arms Mengistu has shown that he could go to any length to please his soviet masters. A communiqué issued at the end of the two weeks "friendship visit" clearly shows the Ethiopian regime's complete allegiance to the Soviet Union. To support his demands Mengistu has also come out with some "weighty" arguments. The first is of course the increasing anti-soviet sentiment within the armed forces and among the Ethiopian people and the need to "crush" such patriotic sentiments. But what the soviets would appreciate more is the acceptance by the Ethiopian regime of a demand to build a sophisticated 100 millions \$ worth military base in the Gibe region of southern Ethiopia. Nothing has filtered out about the negotiations on this issue. But ME'ISONE sources in Addis Abeba have indicated that secret agreements concerning this military base have already been worked out and that it would not be long before construction works start at the indicated site.

▶ EPLF exposes preparations for chemical warfare

According to EPLF sources, the Ethiopian regime has completed the process of preliminary preparations for the intensification of a particularly vicious form of modern chemical warfare. Large quantities of defoliant agents such as 2,4,5T have already been supplied by the Soviet Union with the necessary logistical support. 140 MI 24 helicopters for use in the spray of these deadly chemical anti-personal agents and 200 soviet experts in gas warfare have arrived in the country starting June 1980.

In view of these facts (which are conformed by ME'ISONE sources in Addis Abeba) the EPLF has called upon the international community to help avert this impending danger and to strongly denounce as well as to take measures against the violation of the international conventions and agreements prohibiting the use of bacteriological and toxic weapons.

▶ Ethiopian youth demand withdrawal of all foreign troops

The 20th annual congress of the Ethiopian Students Union in Europe (ESUE) and the 5th congress of the United Progressive Ethiopian Students Union in North America (UPESUNA) were held during the month of August 1980 in Hannover and Washington D.C. respectively. Both congresses condemned the chauvinist military dictatorship in Ethiopia and the naked violation of the country's national independence by the soviet bloc countries. They expressed support for the democratic movements of the oppressed nationalities that are struggling for national self determination and called upon all democratic and patriotic forces to close ranks in their fight against the present dictatorship in Ethiopia. Both organizations renewed their long standing support for ME'ISONE and vowed to continue the struggle for democracy, self determination and national independence.

Both organizations condemned the Soviet Union for the counter revolutionary role that it is playing in the country and for its violation of Ethiopia's national independence. They demanded that all foreign troops be immediately withdrawn from Ethiopian soil and vowed to continue the struggle until the complete restauration of the motherland's independence and sovereignty.

ME'ISONE AND THE STRUGGLE FOR NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE (contd.)

The years of the revolutionary offensive (1974-77) witnessed the proclamation of the revolutionary decrees that transformed the economic basis of the old feudal order and seriously undermined the traditional political structure. By late 1975, the growing unity and strength of the forces opposed to these changes, put on the agenda of the progressive forces, the urgent necessity of creating a broad democratic and patriotic front in order to face this challenge. ME'ISONE proposed a clear anti-feudal and anti-imperialist platform to serve as the basis of unity for all progressive forces. This platform, known as the Ethiopian National Democratic Revolution Programme (NDRP) was accepted by the Derg and was proclaimed as the comprehensive guide line of the Ethiopian Revolution in April 1976.

The question of Ethiopia's national independence, considered part and parcel of the revolutionary struggle, was dealt with correctly. The NDRP opted for a policy of non-alignment and for the unsweaving defence of Ethiopia's national independence. This was in line not only with the programme of the ME'ISONE but also with the longstanding spirit of patriotism of the Ethiopian people. The adaptation of this policy was not however achieved without a struggle waged against two kinds of deviations. On the one hand revolutionaries had to fight against pro-american elements who opposed the programme as a whole and opted for the maintenance of Ethiopia's "traditional alliances". On the other hand, some "progressives" maintained that Ethiopia's new foreign policy can not be a neutral one in the struggle between imperialism and the socialist camp. The later, they asserted, was the natural ally of countries like Ethiopia who are fighting for their emancipation. ME'ISONE and the now defunct organization "Proletarian League" firmly stood against both these tendencies. They struggled for a policy of consistent non-alignment not only because it would guarantee the national independence of the country but also because this policy would sense the revolutionary struggle. They asserted that the revolution would succeed only if and when the Ethiopian people rely mainly on their own forces. They maintained that alliance with any of the superpowers would only mean an inevitable intervention in the country's internal affairs and the reversal of the revolutionary process.

With the democratic and patriotic objectives of the revolutionary struggle thus clearly outlined what remained was the mobilization, organization and arming of the popular masses to implement the declared objectives. The purpose of the Provisional Office for Mass Organizational Affairs (POMOA) was precisely this. The agitational and organizational work done by the POMOA essentially composed of ME'ISONE militants, during the year 1976 was so effective that by the end of the year a situation of dual power developed in the country. For the first time in Ethiopian history, a new democratic power capable of taking the destiny of the country into its hand existed side by side with the

reactionary state bureaucracy of the former regime. A serious and life and death confrontation issued from this dual power situation.

The revolutionary camp lead by some of the progressive elements within the Derg, POMOA and ME'ISONE had a very dense network of democratic mass organizations which mobilized millions of peasants, workers, city dwellers, youth and women. These mass organizations had their own elected tribunals, executive committees and security forces. The counter revolutionary camp correctly perceived that the development of these democratic organizations and their vanguard forces constituted a mortal danger to its own survival.

It can be said that from 1976 to the end of 1978, the history of the struggle between revolution and counter-revolution in Ethiopia was essentially one of the life and death struggle between these two centers of power. The democratic forces struggled for the integral implementation of all the democratic and patriotic provisions of the NDRP, for the creation of a democratic and independent Ethiopia and for the strengthening of the democratic organizations working towards these objectives. The counter-revolutionary camp allied itself first with American imperialism in order to arrest the steady development of the mass organizations and the vanguard forces and to reverse the revolutionary process. When these attempts failed, they allied themselves with the Soviet Union to pursue the same counter-revolutionary objectives.

During the year 1976 and a part of 1977, American imperialism closely worked with the anti-NDRP forces in Ethiopia. It fomented a series of reactionary and fascistic coup d'Etats, most serious among which was the one attempted by Major Sisay Habte and general Getachew Nadew in July 1976. When this attempt was foiled, american imperialism not only continued to arm feudal bandits in the rural areas but also unleashed assassination squads to spread terror in Ethiopia's urban centers. What has been known as the "white terror campaign" thus started in September 1976. The declared aim of the counter revolutionary forces and the ultra "left" EPRP was the physical liquidation of all the vanguard elements of the revolutionary struggle and specially the members of ME'ISONE, the POMOA, elected leaders of the democratic mass organizations etc. During the following months terror raged in Ethiopia's cities and hundreds of progressives were murdered. Fully aware of the dangerous implications of "white terror" ME'ISONE agitated for the creation of "Committees for the Defence of the Revolution" (CDR) and the immediate arming of such committees. It also called for the immediate proclamation of the democratic rights bill that it prepared in early 1976. However, the Derg, which by this time was under the full control of the rightist forces gave a deaf ear to the popular demands. In fact at this time some Derg members were secretly providing arms for the EPRP.

The situation was further aggravated by the isolation of the revolution in the international field. In fact, international

imperialism waged simultaneously a vicious propaganda campaign aimed at discrediting the Ethiopian revolution in the eyes of world progressive forces. They spoke of fascism and terror knowing very well that the fascists and terrorists in the country were those very forces who had their political and material support. They said little about the white terror that was raging in Ethiopia and that was claiming the lives of hundreds of the country's valourous sons and daughters among whom the vast majority were members of ME'ISONE.

At this time the Soviet Union and its allies had their own reasons to fear the development of the revolution in Ethiopia. In fact, it was clear to every one that the democratic and patriotic camp was led by ME'ISONE and that this camp struggled for the integral implementation of the NDRP. The establishment of a democratic power in an independent Ethiopia run counter to the hegemonic designs of the Soviet Union. It was clear that the later interests would only be served by an anti-democratic and puppet regime, isolated from the people and entirely dependent on foreign powers. The Soviet Union understood that neither the "maoist" and "bourgeois nationalist" ME'ISONE nor any other democratic government that may come as a result of victorious revolution could be counted upon to serve this purpose. Just as american imperialism and internal reaction, the Soviet Union was therefore interested in the dismiss of dual power.

That is why one cannot even speak of moral and political support, let alone material support from the Soviet bloc countries. During these critical months, these countries repeatedly turned down demands for arms and other material and political support to the besieged revolution. In fact, the so-called "anti-imperialist" forces in the west was busy denigrating the revolution just as the imperialists were doing. Not only did these forces spoke of fascism and "counter-revolutionary" terror but also praised the terrorist EPRP for its "achievements" and "contributions" to the Ethiopian revolution. This was no accident. The Soviet Bloc countries and their allies in the west knew very well the anti-ME'ISONE EPRP would fall in the Soviet designs in Ethiopia. These "anti-imperialist" forces maintained good relations with the ultra "left" organization and extended both moral and material support in the hope of doing away with the "maoist" ME'ISONE and promoting its take over of the Derg itself.

The Soviet attitude changed however after the rightist coup d'Etat attempt was foiled in February 1977. Following the events of the 3rd of February, the limited arming of the CDRs, the promises of the immediate proclamation of democratic rights, the unprecedented development of the democratic mass organizations etc. left the rightist camp completely demoralized. But very soon, the development of the POMOA and ME'ISONE led the formerly under the leadership of the Derg to reconsider the whole situation. Something had to be done to arrest the developments of these organizations which they did not control. Mengistu's organization, SEDED, opposed democratic demands of the people and

started to ally itself with the rightists. For the first time a serious breach was in the making between ME'ISONE and SEDED.

It is at this time that the Soviet bloc countries suddenly "discovered" the Ethiopian Revolution. Following the take over by Mengistu (and having lost all hope in the discredited EPRP) delegations from the Soviet bloc countries flocked to Addis Abeba to give support to the "Ethiopian Revolution". At the end of March 1977, Fidel Castro came to Ethiopia and offered the solidarity of the soviet bloc countries in Ethiopia's struggle against American imperialism. But what was becoming clear was that the new rightist alliance and the soviet bloc countries had the same basic interest in arresting the revolutionary development and putting an end to the process that would lead to the establishment of a democratic government in an independent Ethiopia.

The new situation brought forth new tasks. Ethiopia's democratic and patriotic forces had to defeat the continuous plots of american imperialism and arab reaction without going counter to the principles layed down in the NDRP and alienating the country's national independence. This meant an exposure of the dangers of Soviet "internationalism" and an intensive agitation built around the ideas of self reliance and national independence. A week after Fidel Castros visit to Ethiopia, the "Voice of the Masses", the official organ of ME'ISONE, outlined in no uncertain terms, the position that should be taken by Ethiopia's progressive forces.

ME'ISONE declared that this belated support of the Soviet bloc countries was positive because it would help to break the isolation of the Ethiopian revolution in the international field. But at the same time, ME'ISONE dwelt upon the necessary limits of this support and in no uncertain terms warned Ethiopia's progressive forces of the dangers that led ahead if we rely on Soviet "internationalism". It stated :

"No matter how serious the economic, political and social problems may be, no matter how many revolutionaries may fall, in short no matter how great the sacrifices or how protracted the struggle may be, revolutionaries must, under all circumstances, rely on the 28 million Ethiopians and on the resources of the country. The day we start to deviate from this correct path and put our hope on foreign forces, let us stand warned that we are contributing towards the crippling of our revolution, endangering our age old national independence and preparing the country for the day of a new enslavement".

The development of events after the soviet intervention in Ethiopia clearly showed that this assesment was correct. Soviet intervention not only crippled the on going Etiopian revolution but also meant a naked violation of the motherland's national independence.

FROM THE PROGRAMME OF ME'ISONE : THE ALL ETHIOPIA SOCIALIST
MOVEMENT

PART II, E : NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE

1. Ethiopia's national independence, sovereignty, integrity and honour shall be staunchly defended and an end will be put to all forms of foreign interference in its internal affairs.

2. All treaties and agreements to which Ethiopia has been a party of and which violate its national rights and independence are to be abrogated.

3. Foreign relations are to be conducted on the basis of the principles of neutrality and free from any imperialist influence.

4. The country shall not be a party to military pacts and alliances of any sort. No foreign military force shall be harboured nor any foreign military base maintained on the Ethiopian soil.



HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT REPRESSION IN ETHIOPIA ?



■ Do you know that with over 30,000 political prisoners, the present Ethiopian government is the most repressive regime in independent Africa?

■ That this staggering figure of political prisoners has never been attained even during the dark days of the feudal tyranny?

■ That political prisoners are subjected to the most inhuman torture, starvation and humiliation and many are executed secretly without any form of trial?

■ That more than 20,000 of these prisoners are members or sympathisers of ME'ISONE and elected representatives of the mass organizations created prior to 1977?

■ That repression against progressives has started with Soviet bloc involvement in the country's internal affairs and has intensified with the increasing Soviet hold on the country?

■ That over a million Ethiopians have been forced into exile and that according to figures of the UNHCR one out of every ten refugees in the world is an Ethiopian?

That starting from April 1977, thousands of Ethiopian progressives have been assassinated and summarily executed by various counter-revolutionary groups and the henchmen of the Derge?

■ That all this repression and the sale out of the country's national independence have provoked the determined patriotic resistance of the Ethiopian people and that armed opposition is developing in all the country's regions?

■ That ME'ISONE is working to unite this broad based opposition to the military dictatorship in a single democratic front capable of leading the Ethiopian People to final victory?

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP ?

Send telegrammes and/or letters of protest to the Ethiopian Government at the following address :

PMAC

P.O.Box 5707

Addis Abeba, ETHIOPIA

For any further contacts please write :

New Ethiopia

P.O.Box 5077, 16305 SPANGA - SWEDEN